

Stages and Ohio Alternate Assessment

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the Ohio's alternate assessment process because:

- 1. Stages aligns with Ohio Alternate Assessment benchmark skills in Writing, Reading and Math.**
- 2. Stages generates records of learner performance.**
- 3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. Stages aligns with Ohio Alternate Assessment benchmark skills in Writing, Reading and Math.

Stages activities provide a way for learners participating in alternate assessment to demonstrate achievement of many benchmark skills on the alternate assessment rating form.¹ The learner's IEP team can also use Stages to help determine if alternate assessment is appropriate. Please refer to the section of this document, entitled "How Stages Correlates with Ohio Alternate Assessment" for detailed matching to the skills in the alternate assessment checklist.

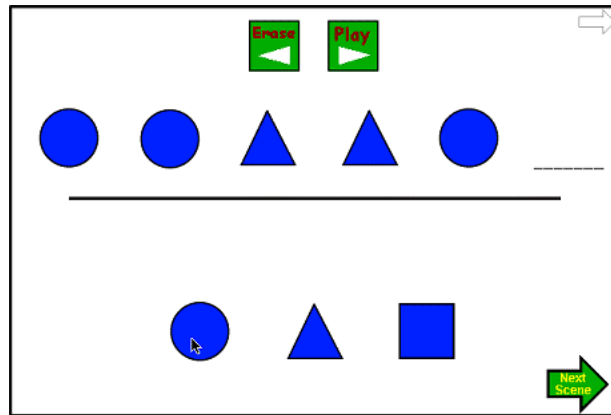
2. Stages generates records of learner performance.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product as a benchmark. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructor may wish to then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

¹ From "Appendix A: Sample Materials for Benchmarking," Alternate Assessment and the IEP Team, by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children.

Source: [http://www.ode.state.oh.us/exceptional_children/Word/Alternate Assessment and IEP.doc](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/exceptional_children/Word/Alternate%20Assessment%20and%20IEP.doc)
Accessed June 18, 2002.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include real-life community settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools..

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Ohio alternate assessment cycle for special education. The Stages software is a comprehensive benchmark tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable information on learner skill achievement, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with Ohio Alternate Assessment

Math and Number Skills Alternate Assessment Skill Rating Form for IEP Goals

Uses one to one correspondence
Recognizes numerals representing number of objects
Counts objects with meaning

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Number ID, Counting

- Stage Four *Number ID* gives the learner an opportunity to match numbers with their names. The *Counting* activity asks the learner to choose from a number line to show the quantity (1-10) of objects displayed on the screen. The number line is device-accessible and the activity includes simple animations.

Solves simple daily living situations by sorting and classifying

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Object Identification: Toys, Food

Category Identification: Clothing, Vehicles

Function Identification: Clothing, Toys, Vehicles

- These Stage Three activities give the learner an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of objects and their functions in daily living.

Makes simple size, [weight and length] comparisons

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimating

- *Estimating* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of relative quantity and size vocabulary such as 'more/less' and 'bigger/smaller'.

Can tell time to the quarter hour

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Assess: Telling Time

- The learner indicates time to the minute, quarter-hour, half-hour, and hour on digital and analog clocks.

Adds and subtracts 1 – 2 digits with objects, markers
Demonstrates understanding of place values
Uses simple 1 – 2 digit addition (facts or calculator)
Uses simple 1 – 2 digit subtraction (facts or calculator)

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -)

- The learner uses the accessible number line to input the solution to simple one- and two-digit addition and subtraction fact problems in Stage Five.

Uses simple fractions for measuring

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Fractions

- *Fractions* includes parts of whole objects and groups of objects.

Demonstrates multiplication and simple division concepts with objects

Can multiply and do simple division concepts with objects

Can multiply and do single digit division with calculator

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (x, ÷), Word Problems (x, ÷)

- *Math Facts* includes addition and subtraction questions with and without regrouping. *Word Problems* includes problems with and without on-screen manipulatives to aid the learner.

Recognizes coins and their number equivalents

Recognizes and knows equivalencies of currency (\$1.00 - \$50.00)

Uses money in daily situations

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Assess: Money Names, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- Coins and bills are assessed in *Money Names*. Money questions are combined with real-life scenarios in *Counting Money*. The learner identifies correct dollar amounts in combinations of bills and coins. In *Money Equivalents*, learners select the correct set of bills and/or coins that is equivalent in value to a given set of bills and/or coins.

Writing and Expressive Communication

Alternate Assessment Skill Rating Form for IEP Goals

Uses facial expressions to communicate

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

All Stages

- Observations Forms at each Stage guide the instructor to record critical learner behaviors that demonstrate expressive communication.

Makes choices

Uses an augmentative system to indicate choice of activity

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: All activities

All Stages: All 'Explore' activities

- Stage Three is the first Stage that gives the learner a chance to independently choose preferred activities.
- All the 'Explore' activities in each Stage are accessible. Depending on the activity, the learner can either advance at any pace through short illustrated passages or select the desired object on the screen to explore.

Uses manual or verbal communication system

Uses technology to aide/enhance communication, uses a keyboard

Stage Seven: Making Stories

- Stage Seven *Making Stories* allows the learner to write about personal experience or contribute to discussion using the text-to-speech option, an appropriate input device and the on-screen keyboard option in this activity.

Uses telephone

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Number ID

- Stage Four *Number ID* provides the learner with an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to recognize numerals from number words (spoken and/or text) as a prerequisite to using the telephone. The numbers are shown in the context of a telephone keypad.

Copies and traces

Prints name

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Words: Copy Words

- Stage Seven *Copy Words* provides the learner with word that are dictated or displayed for the learner to copy. The instructor can create and save custom word lists and enter phonetic spellings to adjust the computer's pronunciation.

Spells and writes common words

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences

- Stage Seven *Building Sentences* provides the learner with word walls at three different levels of vocabulary. The learner can use this activity to write one or two sentences without requiring typing ability. *Writing Sentences* gives the learner the opportunity to produce sentences in response to an instructor-generated prompt (with or without text and voiceover) such as a question or a sentence to copy. Both activities have text-to-speech feedback.

Writes in phrases

Writes sentences

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences

- Stage Seven *Building Sentences* provides the learner with word walls at three different levels of vocabulary. The learner can use this activity to write one or two sentences without requiring typing ability. *Writing Sentences* gives the learner the opportunity to produce sentences in response to an instructor-generated prompt (with or without text and voiceover) such as a question or a sentence to copy. Both activities have text-to-speech feedback.

Retells story

Discusses events in a story

Dictates thoughts into words

Expresses complete thoughts, ideas, verbally

Writes on a topic

Writes brief notes

Writes brief paragraph

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

- *Making Stories* allows the learner to import a photograph as a writing prompt. An on-screen keyboard provides access to punctuation and capitalization. There is text-to-speech feedback in this activity.

Reading and Receptive Communication

Alternate Assessment Skill Rating Form for IEP Goals

Focuses visual attention
Discriminates between sounds
Has eye contact with speaker
Listens attentively

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold, Press and Release

- In Stage One, information is recorded about the learner's response to sound and/or visual stimuli.

Matches and copies objects
Follows oral directions

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

All Stages: *All Activities*

- The *Patterns* activities in Stage Four allow the learner to first view patterns of color, shape and sound as they are played. The learner then selects appropriate objects to complete patterns. Finally the learner creates patterns using objects on the screen.
- Activities in all Stages include verbal prompts and directions for the learner to follow in order to complete a task. Text (visual) cues may be turned on or off in preferences for some activities.

Listens to songs/stories
Attends to visual display, book, media
Play reads a story
Silent reads for information/enjoyment
Employs decoding strategies

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: *All activities*

Stage Five: *Reading:* Sounds, Meaning

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- Stage Two activities are short rhyming passages about common subjects such as toys, vehicles, and animals. The learner uses an access device to advance through the passage. Simple animations keep the passages engaging for the learner.
- The Stage Five *Sounds* activity is based on a series of rhyming sentence pairs. The learner is shown the sentences with simple animations. Then, the learner is asked to choose the rhyming words from a word wall. The *Meaning* activity asks the learner to choose items from a scene to show understanding of the meanings of words.
- Stage Six *Stories* include pictures for context clues to meanings of text.

Recites alphabet
Knows letter sound correspondence

Related Stages Activities

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Letter ID, Letter Sounds

- The learner explores and demonstrates mastery of consonants and vowels and their sounds with the help of simple, yet engaging animated rewards.

Recognizes basic survival words

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Assess:* Recognizing Signs

- This Stage Six activity includes signs such as restroom, exit, and telephone, using realistic scenarios. The learner selects the appropriate sign to look for given a verbal (auditory) or text (visual) cue. Community signs in these activities relate to the *Stories* activities and include photographs of scenes from those activities.

Reads basic words, i.e. mom, dad, own name

Matches pictures to words

Has a sight vocabulary of 25 words

Reads for meaning at _____ grade level

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Reading:* Meaning

- The learner finds the picture within a scene that illustrates a word that is shown and/or spoken aloud. The activity uses Dolch words from five levels (Pre-Primer through Grade Three).

Follows printed instructions, recipe

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Mystery Person, Mystery Shape

- These activities give the learner a chance to demonstrate deductive reasoning skills based on written and/or spoken instructions. The learner eliminates choices in order to identify the mystery item.